

Congressional Delegation Objects To Guard Relocation

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MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. -- The Bay Area's Congressional delegation sent a letter to the Secretary of the Air Force Tuesday expressing "serious concern" about a proposal to move an Air National Guard rescue wing from Moffett Field.

The proposal would move the 129th Air Rescue Wing from Mountain View's Moffett Field to the currently closed Castle Air Force base in Merced. Air Force officials believe the Central Valley's lower cost of living would improve retention of unit personnel.

The 11 representatives who signed the letter strongly disagreed with that assertion.

"The notion that the retention level of trained 129th Rescue Wing personnel will improve is patently false, as is any suggestion that the delegation supports the move," the letter said.

The delegation said the calculations used to determine the cost of living in the Bay Area were based on the inflated figures of the late 1990s "dot com boom."

"The cost of living is higher in the Bay Area than other parts of the country, however, the costs of buying or renting homes have recently leveled out and have even declined. Housing for service men and women remains available at Moffett Field, and the local communities are committed to assisting us to identify more affordable housing locations," the letter said.

The 129th Air Rescue Wing is the last military air unit based at Moffett Field, which has been homes to military aircraft since the 1930s.

The unit includes approximately 850 military and civilian personnel. During the recent war with Iraq the unit performed the first-ever combat rescue by an Air National Guard unit, according to the unit's Web site.

The letter was signed by 11 members of the Bay Area's Congressional Delegation: Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, Sam Farr, D-Carmel, Mike Honda, D-San Jose, Tom Lantos, D-San Mateo, Barbara Lee, D-Oakland, Zoe Lofgren, D-San Jose, George Miller, D-Martinez, Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, Pete Stark, D-Fremont, Ellen Tauscher, D-Alamo, and Lynn Woolsey, D-Petaluma.

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